

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 OPR-02 SCA-01 IO-13 EUR-12 NEAE-00

A-01 AID-05 CCO-00 DHA-02 L-03 H-02 NSC-05 OC-06

OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 PM-04 SCCT-01 SCS-03 SP-02 SS-15

USSS-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03

NSCE-00 USIE-00 SAM-01 ORM-02 MMO-01 SSO-00 /110 W

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O P 071525Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8474

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4379

FROM TELFORD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, SY

SUBJECT: CONVOY TO DAMASCUSU

1. NO PROBLEMS WERE ENCOUNTERED DURING CONVOY TRIP. "NOT A SHOT WAS HEARD." ROUTE WAS AS EXPECTED THROUGH SIDON, NABATIEH AND ON. UPON REACHING THE SYRIAN BORDER CROSSING I QUERIED THERRY GARDNER FOR ANY PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED THAT I WAS NOT AWARE OF. ANSWER - NONE.

2. FROM BEIRUT TO SIDON THERE WAS LIMITED TRAFFIC, GOOD ROAD CONDITIONS AND LIMITED MILITARY PRESENCE OF ANY KIND. IN SIDON THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE FROM THE ROAD OF ANY RECENT SHELLING; NOR SMOKE IN THE REFINERY AREA. CONVOY STOPPED FOR FIVE-MINUTE BREAK OUTSIDE OF SIDON.

3. PASSING THROUGH NABATIEH WAS LIKE BEIRUT OF A YEAR AGO. THE STREETS WERE FILLED WITH TRAFFIC, VEGETABLE STALLS, ETC. THE CONVOY WAS TOTALLY BROKEN UP BY THE TRAFFIC WITH CAUSE FOR
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A FIFTEEN-MINUTE BREAK AND REGROUPING ONCE WE HAD ALL PASSED

THROUGH THE CITY. OUTSIDE OF NABATIEH THE ROAD CONDITIONS CHANGED WITH MANY "POT HOLES" SLOWING DOWN OUR PROGRESS AS WE WENT.

4. THE CONVOY PASSED THROUGH TWENTY-ONE CHECK POINTS. THEY RANGED FROM THE FIRST ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BEIRUT, MANNED BY LIBYAN TROOPS, TO LAA TROOPS ON NO. 2 TO 12 PRIOR TO ENTERING NABATIEH. THE 13TH CHECKPOINT WAS LOCATED ON THE MOUNTAIN ROAD OUTSIDE OF NABATIEH. THIS WAS WHERE MAJOR "AHMED" DEPARTED THE CONVOY. CHECKPOINT NO. 14 LOCATED DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE CASERNE ANWAR OSMAN, DELAYED US FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES. IT WAS MANNED BY ELEMENTS WHICH WERE DRESSED, CLEAN-SHAVEN AND ACTED MORE LIKE THE OLD LEBANESE ARMY THAN THE LAA. THEY GAVE NO REASON FOR THE DELAY. BETWEEN THIS CHECKPOINT AND MAJORAN THERE WERE SEVERAL OTHER CHECKPOINTS AND VEHICLES CONTAINING "RAG TAG" INDIVIDUALS IDENTICAL TO WHAT IS SEEN SO OFTEN PASSING THE EMBASSY IN BEIRUT.

5. WE FIRST CAME ACROSS SYRIAN ELEMENTS IN AN AREA LATER DESCRIBED TO ME AS AJOUB FARAF ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES AFTER PASSING THROUGH MARJAYOUN. EVERY TRUCK, FIELD PIECE AND TENT WAS CAREFULLY "DUG IN". SMILING FACES WERE EVERYWHERE.

6. REGARDS TO ALL MY COLLEAGUES, OLD AND NEW.
MURPHY

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